



**WHAT
WE
HEARD.**



**PUBLIC
PARTICIPATION**

Retail Demand Study – Consumer Survey

Project Overview:

The City of Airdrie conducted a consumer retail survey as a key component of a larger retail demand study. From October 7 to 25, 2024 Economic Development implemented an online survey to better understand the shopping habits, preferences, and needs of residents. The City used its digital communications channels including MyAirdrie, Facebook and Instagram to create awareness of the survey. 818 participants responded to the consumer survey. This report provides a synopsis of the consumer survey results.

Date: March 31, 2025

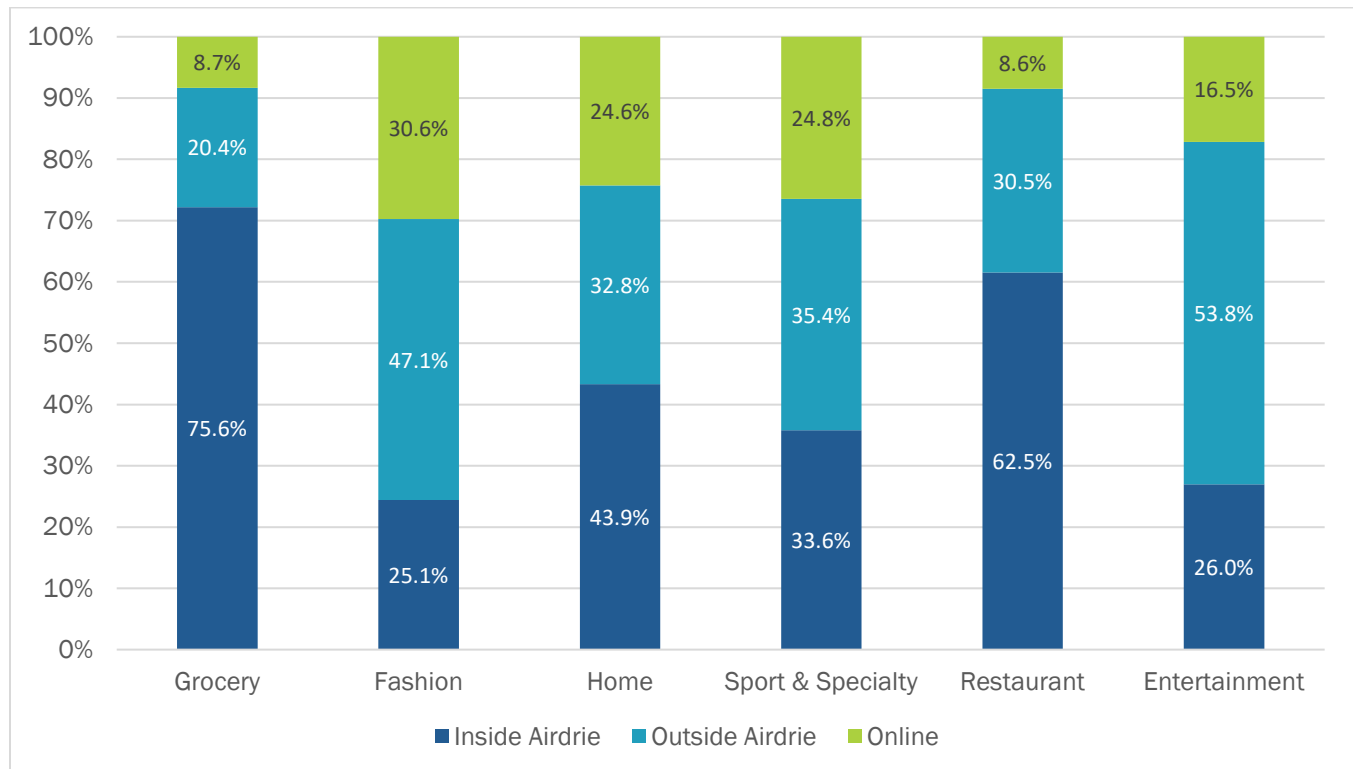
Prepared by the City of Airdrie

Executive Summary

The City of Airdrie conducted a consumer retail survey as a key component of a larger retail demand study. The purpose of the study is to gather detailed insights on what goods and services are currently in demand, where people prefer to shop, and what influences their purchasing decisions.

Most respondents (98%) reported living within Airdrie. Respondents represent a good range of geographic location of residence, ages, and household incomes. The survey exhibits a noticeable female majority (69%), Male respondents (29%) nonetheless exhibited a healthy participation rate, providing balanced input into the survey results.

Respondents indicate they are mostly shopping for groceries and restaurant dining within Airdrie (~60-70%). Spending on fashion, home, sport and specialty and entertainment is largely happening outside of Airdrie (~35-50%) or, for fashion, home and sport and specialty shopping, online (~25-30%).



Overall participants expressed a desire for more varied options for retail, dining, entertainment and leisure activities and locations in Airdrie. And indicated that more walkable retail areas, with shops and destinations close enough to walk between (i.e. park once and walk between shops) would encourage them to shop and participate in entertainment and leisure activities in Airdrie more often. As would a greater variety of products, services and amenities.

Project Information

The City of Airdrie conducted a consumer retail survey as a key component of a larger retail demand study. This project was designed to better understand the shopping habits, preferences, and needs of both residents and businesses. The purpose of the study is to gather detailed insights on what goods and services are currently in demand, where people prefer to shop, and what influences their purchasing decisions.

The findings from this survey will help identify gaps in the local retail market, highlight opportunities and support the development of a more tailored and vibrant retail environment.

Public Participation Approach

From October 7 to 25, 2024 Economic Development implemented an online survey to gather feedback to better understand the shopping habits, preferences, and needs of residents.

A comprehensive marketing plan was developed. Social media, newsletters and portable signage were the main tools used to create awareness of the survey opportunity.

The survey was published using Involve Airdrie, the City's online public engagement portal. 818 participants responded to the consumer survey.

Summary of Public Participation Input

Respondents indicate they are doing a majority of their shopping for groceries and restaurant dining in Airdrie (~60-70%). Spending on fashion, home, sport and specialty and entertainment is largely happening outside of Airdrie (~35-50%) or, most notably for fashion, home and sport and specialty shopping, online (~25-30%).

Overall participants expressed a desire for more varied options for retail, dining, entertainment and leisure activities and locations in Airdrie. And indicated that more walkable retail areas, with shops and destinations close enough to walk between (i.e. park once and walk between shops) would encourage them to shop and participate in entertainment and leisure activities in Airdrie more often. As would a greater variety of products, services and amenities.

What we heard?

The following sections provide summaries of responses to each survey question organized by category of question.

What we heard?	3
PRELIMINARY QUESTIONS	5
GENERAL LOCAL SHOPPING PREFERENCES	6
HOUSEHOLD SPENDING PATTERN	11
DOWNTOWN AIRDRIE SHOPPING HABITS	12
ONLINE AND E-COMMERCE SHOPPING HABITS	15
ENTERTAINMENT AND LEISURE PREFERENCES	17
ABOUT THE RESPONDENTS	22

Notes:

Numbers of responses to individual questions in the survey are reported as n=x included in brackets at the end of the question wording, for example, “Q1 Where do you live in Airdrie? (n=818)”

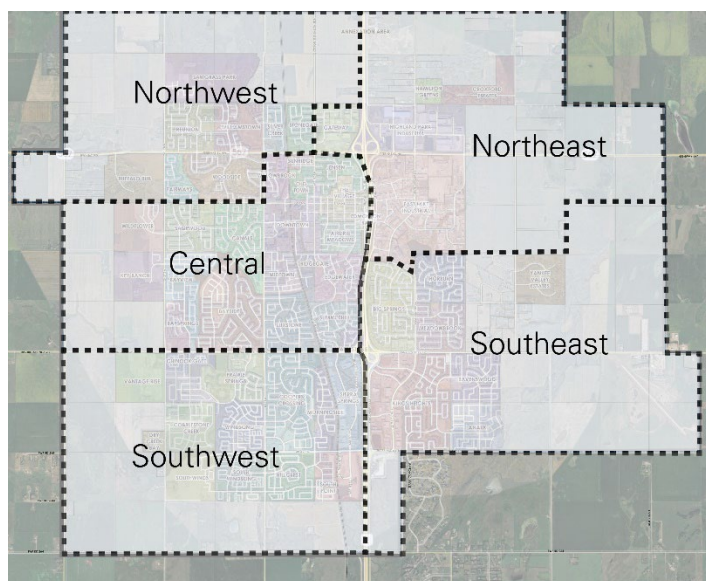
Where a question asks participants to choose multiple responses, for example ‘select all that apply’ or ‘select the top three,’ the total number of question responses will be larger than the number of survey responses. This will be shown in brackets at the end of the question wording as (n=818, 1275). Where the first number is the number of individual responders, and the number after the comma is the total responses received to the question.

PRELIMINARY QUESTIONS

Geographic Distribution. The majority of respondents (98%) reported living within Airdrie. The highest concentrations of respondents reside in the Southwest and Northwest Sectors of the city. A much smaller proportion of respondents (2%) come from outside Airdrie, such as Balzac and nearby areas.

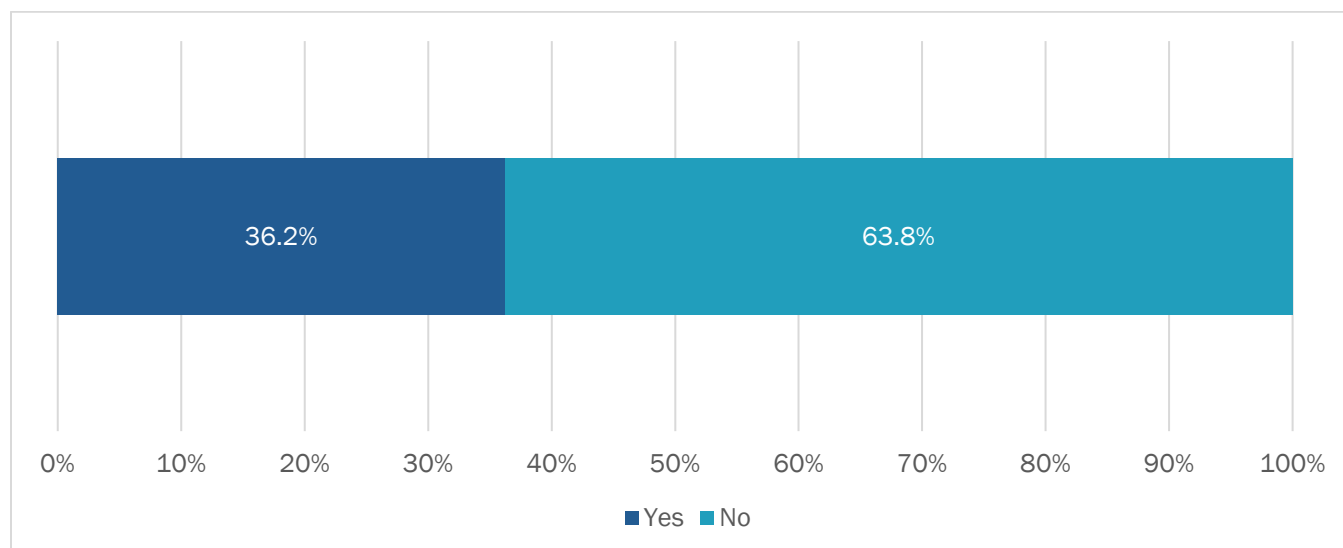
Employment Distribution. Though 98% of respondents live in Airdrie, approximately 64% reported they do not work in Airdrie, which confirms the commuter-shed nature of Airdrie given its proximity to Calgary.

Q1 Where do you live in Airdrie? (n=818)



Northwest	18%
Northeast	2%
Central	20%
Southwest	35%
Southeast	23%
Outside of Airdrie	2%

Q2 Do you work in Airdrie? (n=818)



GENERAL LOCAL SHOPPING PREFERENCES

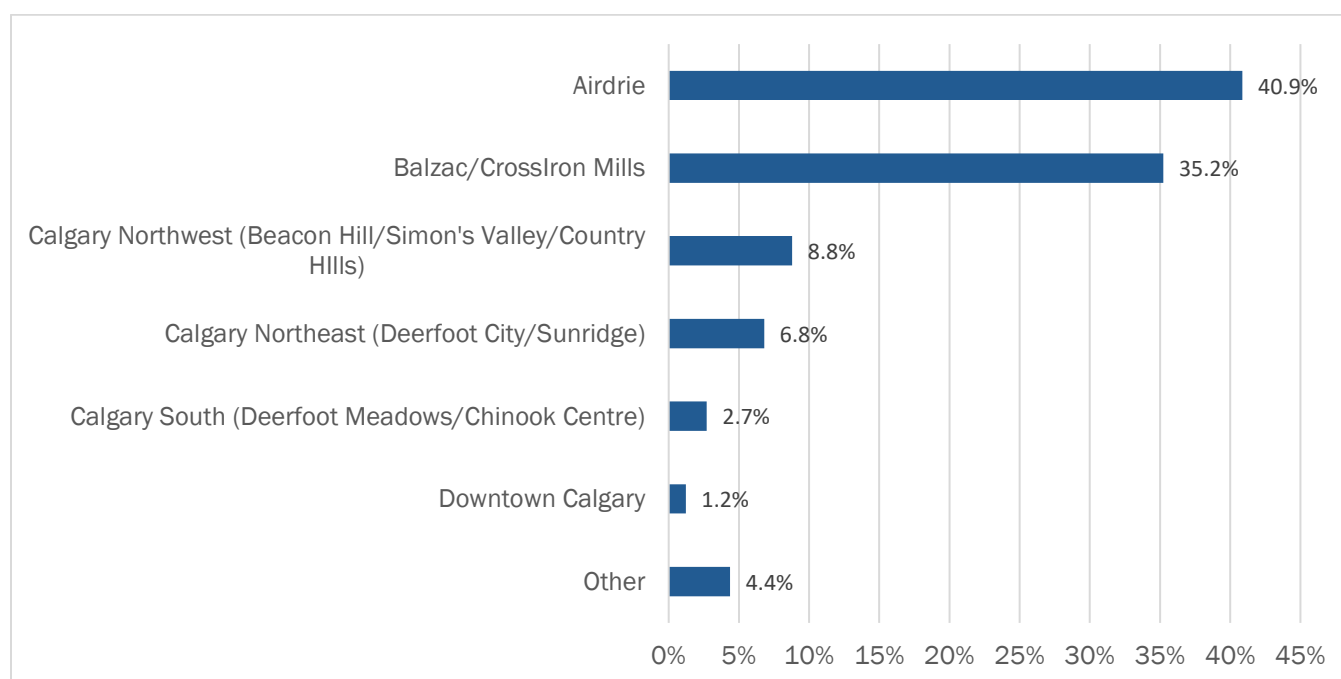
Shopping locations. Most popular shopping locations for Airdrie residents include Airdrie (41%), indicating a strong local shopping base. Balzac/Cross Iron Mills (35%) reflecting its regional shopping attraction. Calgary Northwest and Northeast areas (16%) also attract shoppers. Most respondents shop closer to their home (94%) compared to their workplace (6%).

Frequency of shopping. Approximately 67% of respondents indicated they are shopping at retail businesses in Airdrie weekly. A smaller proportion of respondents shop daily (15%), monthly (12%) or less frequently (6%).

Types of stores. The most frequented types of retail businesses in Airdrie include day-to-day groceries and conveniences (22%). Other types of popular stores included quick-service restaurants (15%), full-service restaurants (13%) and specialty shops including pet stores and gift shops (11%).

Influencing factors. The primary motivations for shopping in Airdrie include convenience (28%) and supporting the local economy (18%), highlighting community-oriented values. Price/value for money was cited by 13% of respondents, showing its importance for budget-conscious consumers.

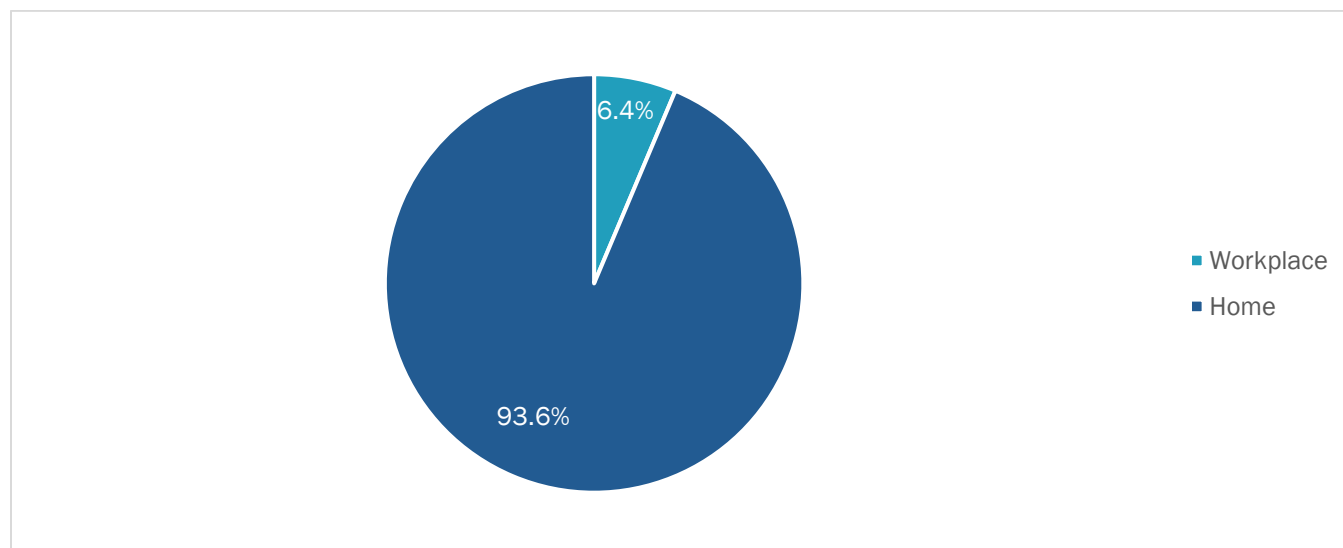
Q3 Where do you typically shop for retail goods and services? Select the top three places. (n=818, 1808)



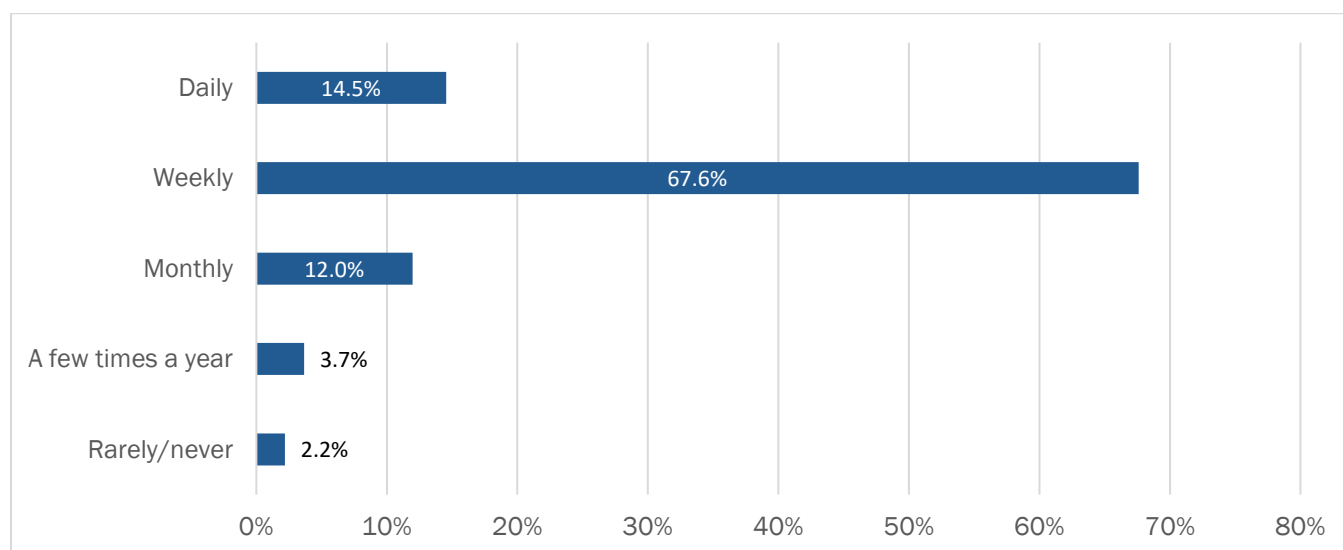
Q3 Top five "Other" responses

Response	Number of mentions	Response	Number of mentions
Online	53	Other towns (e.g. Balzac, Didsbury, Olds, Innisfail, Carstairs)	8
Market Mall (Calgary)	8	Wherever has the goods I need	5
Calgary (other locations)	8		

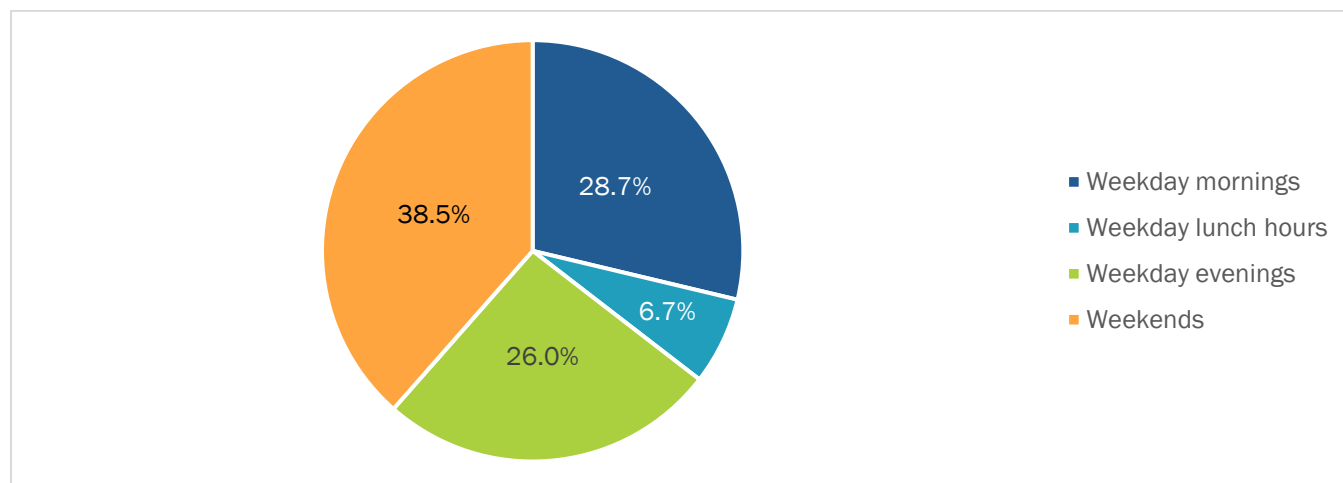
Q4 Do you tend to shop for retail goods and services closer to your workplace or home? (n=818)



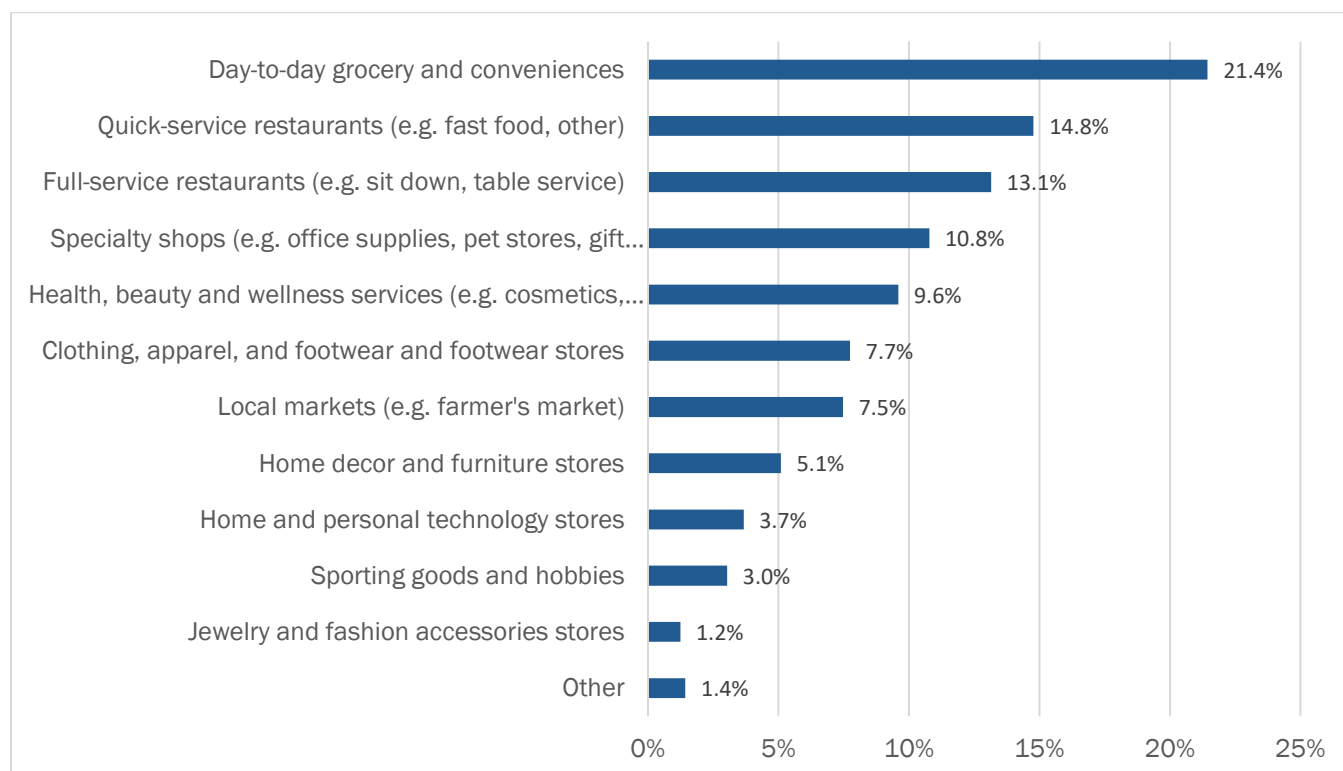
Q5 How often do you shop at retail businesses in Airdrie? (n=818)



Q6 When do you do most of your shopping? (n=818)



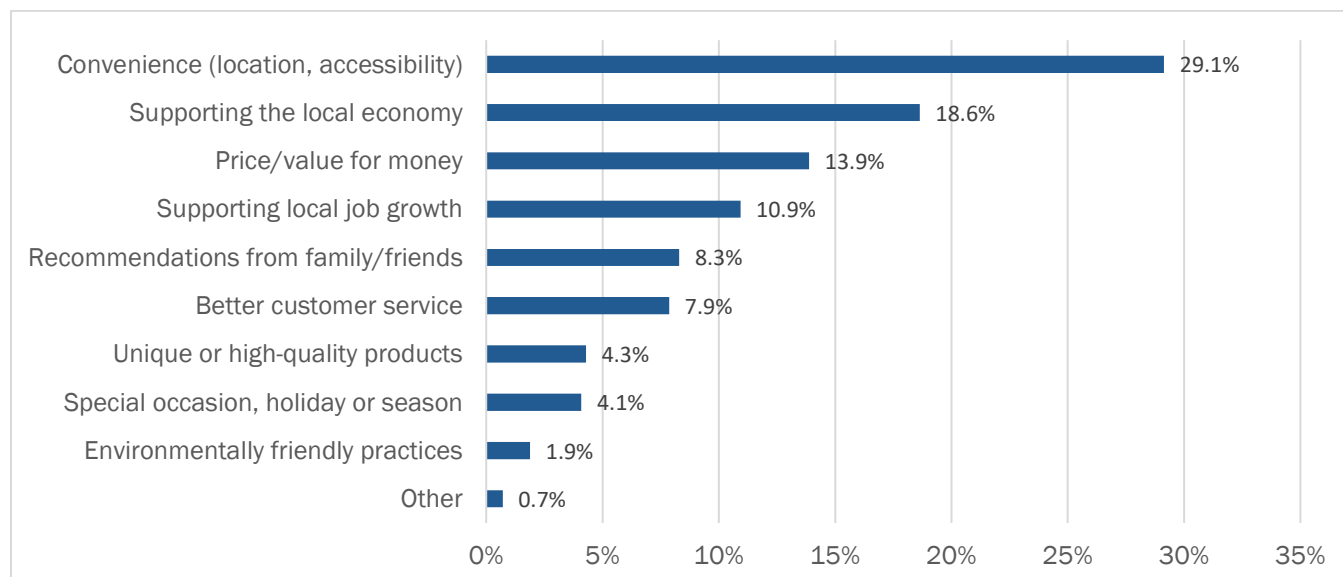
Q7 What types of retail businesses do you shop at most often in Airdrie? Select all that apply. (n=818, 3628)



Q7 Top five "Other" responses

Response	Number of mentions	Response	Number of mentions
Hardware, home repair, farm supply	17	Thrift or consignment stores	6
Home décor, improvement	6	Hobby, special interest	4
Specialty shops	6		

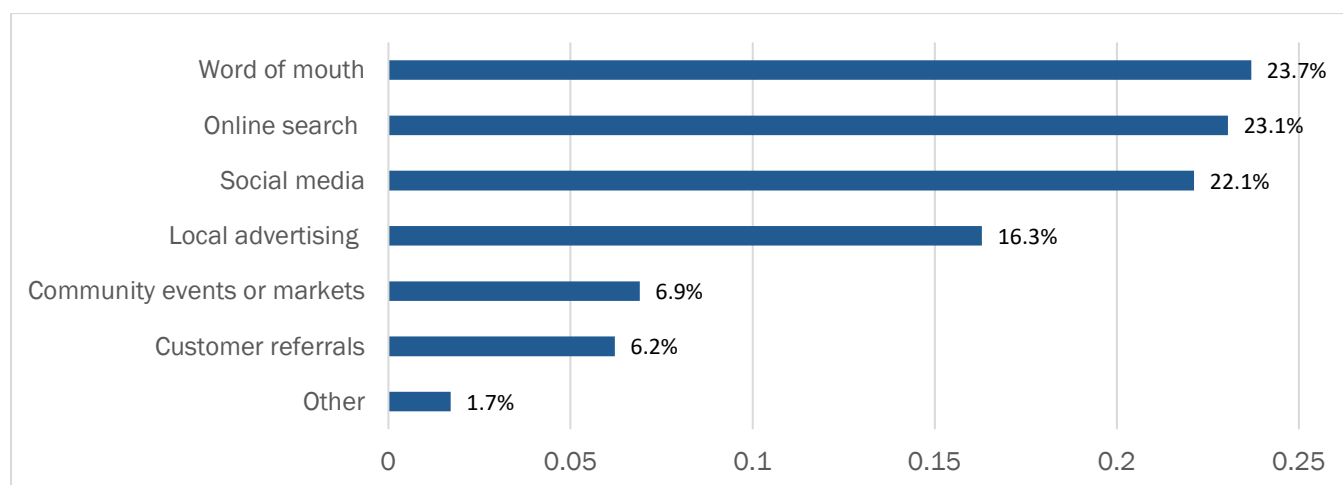
Q8 What influences your decision to shop at a retail business in Airdrie? Select all that apply. (n=818, 2543)



Q8 Top five "Other" responses

Response	Number of mentions	Response	Number of mentions
Proximity, can walk or use less gas	8	Support local economy	1
If what I need is available here	3	Pet friendly	1
Ethnic/specialty grocery stores	2		

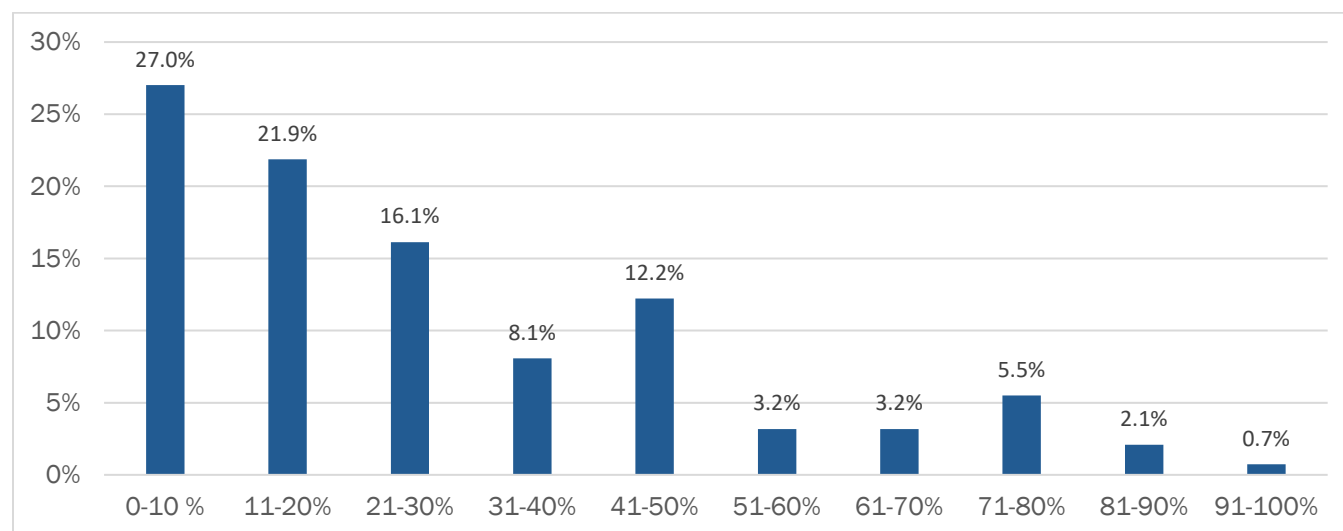
Q9 How do you typically find out about retail businesses in Airdrie? Select all that apply. (n=818, 2043)



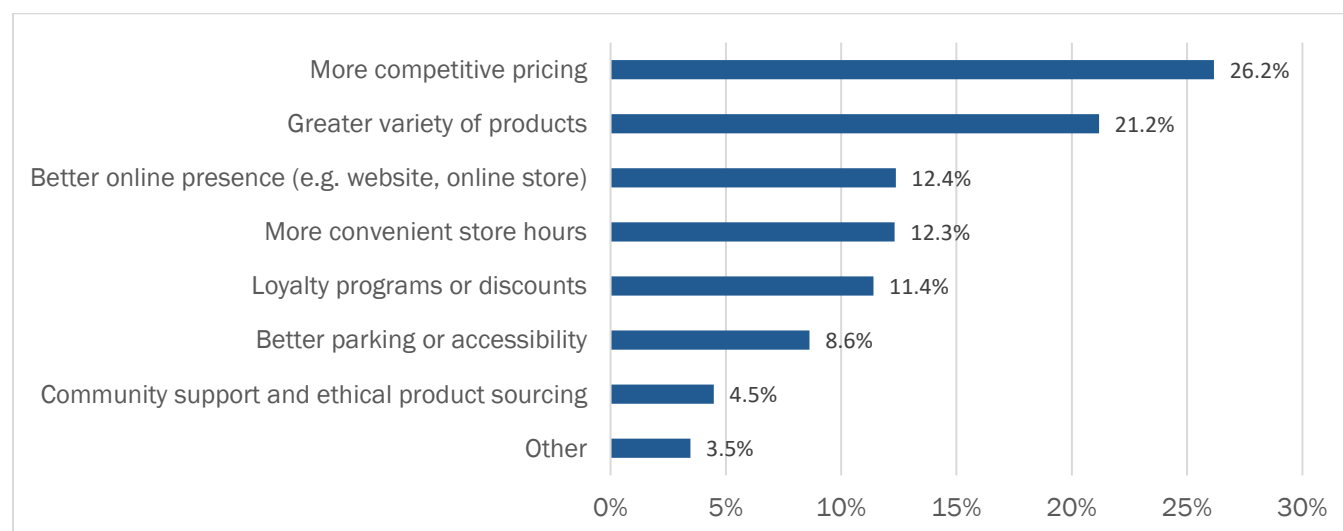
Q9 Top five "Other" responses

Response	Number of mentions	Response	Number of mentions
Drive past	24	Newsletter, email or other notification	2
Walk past	5	App or website (e.g. Flipp, Skip the Dishes)	2
Advertising	1		

Q10 Approximately what percentage (%) of your shopping is at local independent retail stores in Airdrie as opposed to larger chain stores or franchises? (n=818)



Q11 What might influence you to shop more frequently at local independent businesses (boutiques) in Airdrie? Select all that apply. (n=818, 2167)



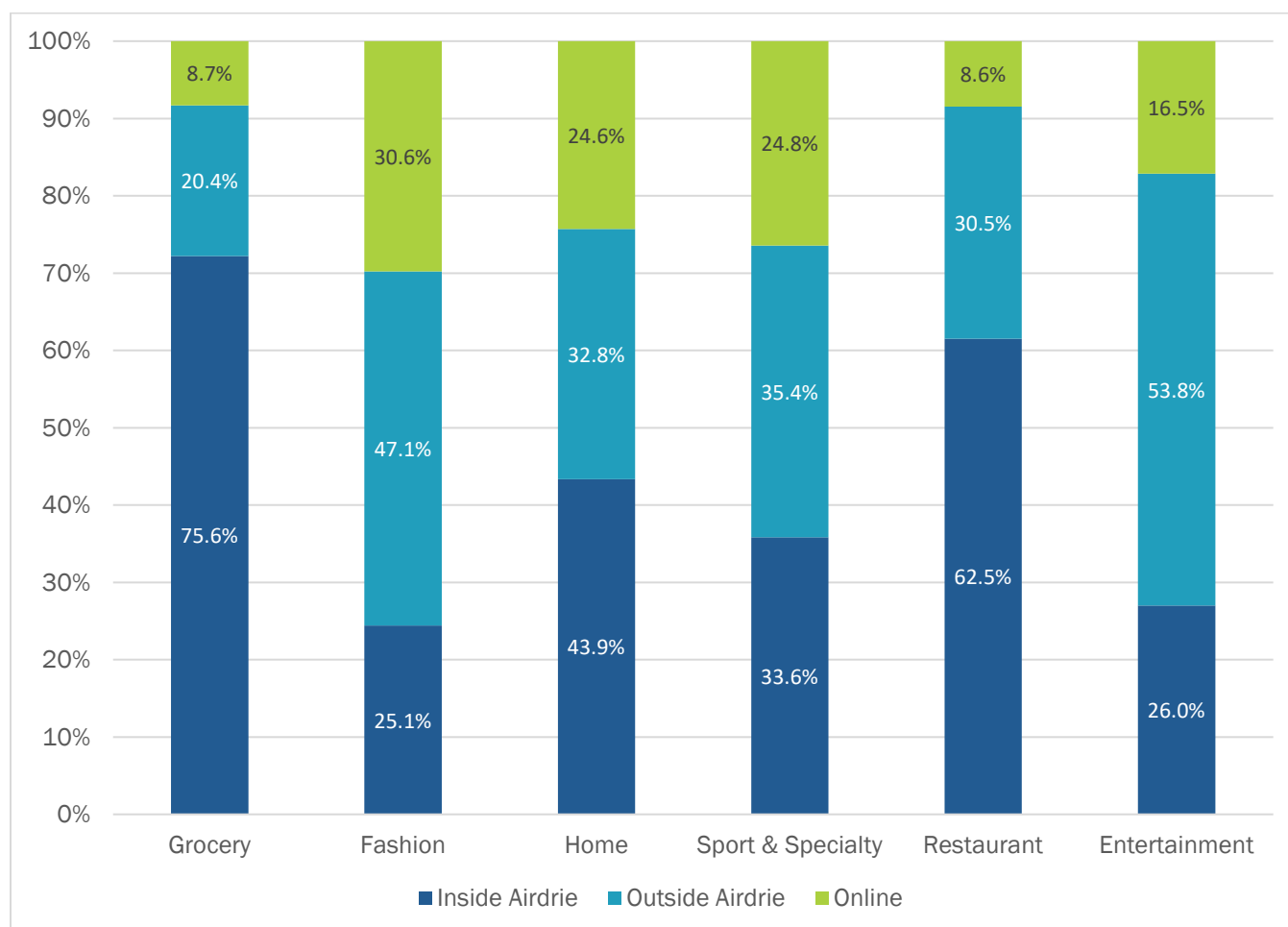
Q11 Top five "Other" responses

Response	Number of mentions	Response	Number of mentions
Greater variety of stores, more independent options	14	If the shops were closer to each other, walkable	11
More awareness of local shops	12	Better transit access	4
If they have what I'm looking for	11		

HOUSEHOLD SPENDING PATTERN

Spending patterns. Respondents indicate they are doing the majority of their shopping for groceries and restaurant dining in Airdrie. Spending on fashion, home, sport and specialty and entertainment is largely happening outside of Airdrie or, most notably for fashion, home and sport and specialty shopping, online.

Q12 When thinking about your average household spending, what percentage (%) of your spending occurs inside Airdrie, outside Airdrie or online in the following categories? Please use scale to insert percentages, adding up to no more than 100% per category. (n=818)



DOWNTOWN AIRDRIE SHOPPING HABITS

Frequency. A large number of respondents are visiting downtown either weekly (35%) or monthly (28%), while a notable 30% of respondents saying they rarely visit.

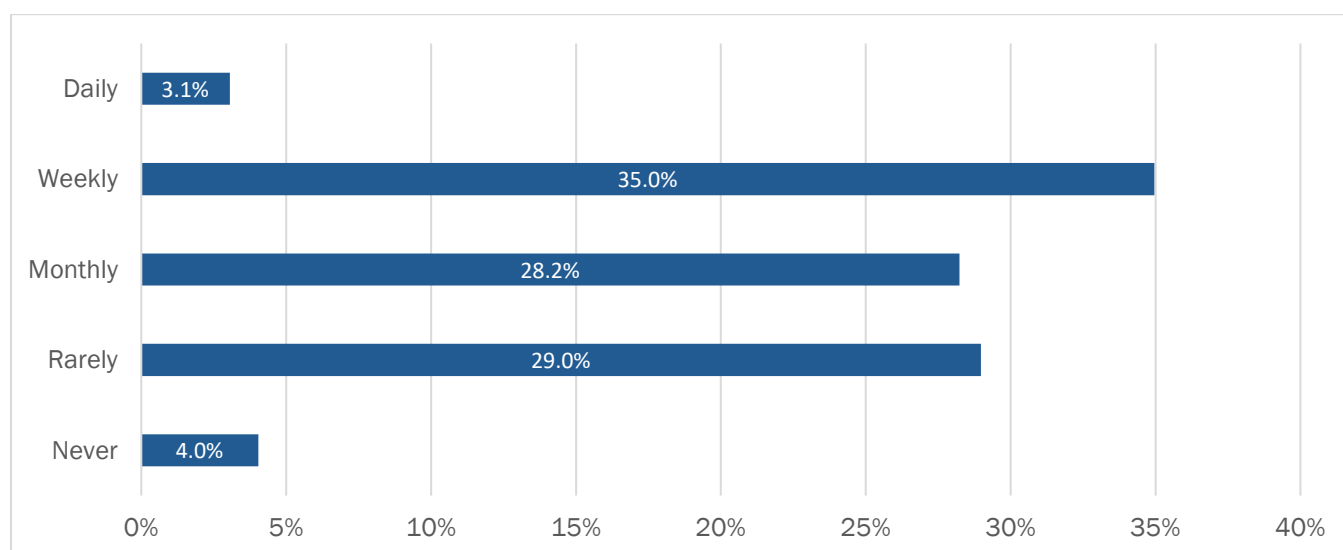
Types of activities. The most popular activities undertaken downtown include shopping (34%), dining (26%) and attending events or festivals (24%).

Reasons for visiting downtown. Convenient location was the most frequently cited reason for visiting downtown (33%). Some respondents also mentioned local or independent businesses (22%) or unique and specialty shops (20%) as additional reasons.

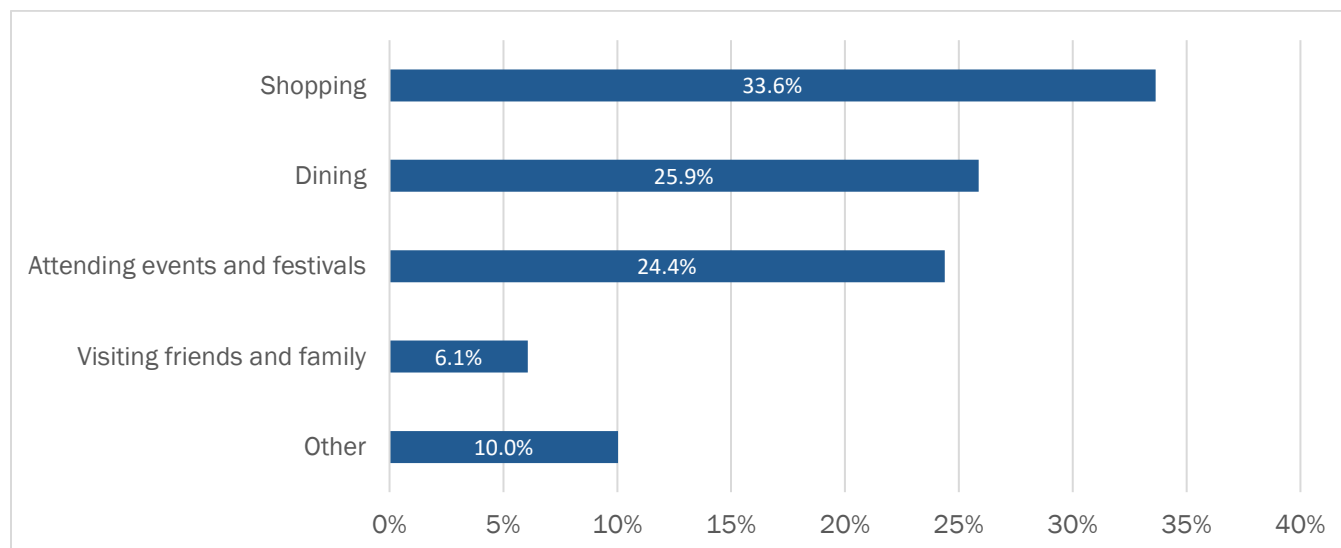
Satisfaction with experience downtown. Only 22% of respondents said they were satisfied or very satisfied with their experience downtown as a retail destination. The majority of respondents said they felt neutral (40%) and approximately 34% said they felt dissatisfied or very dissatisfied about their experience visiting downtown.

What might encourage more visits to downtown. Greater variety of products (33%), more competitive pricing (22%) and more events and activities (16%) were identified as the top three suggestions that might encourage more visits to downtown.

Q13 How often do you visit retail shops and services in downtown Airdrie? (n=818)



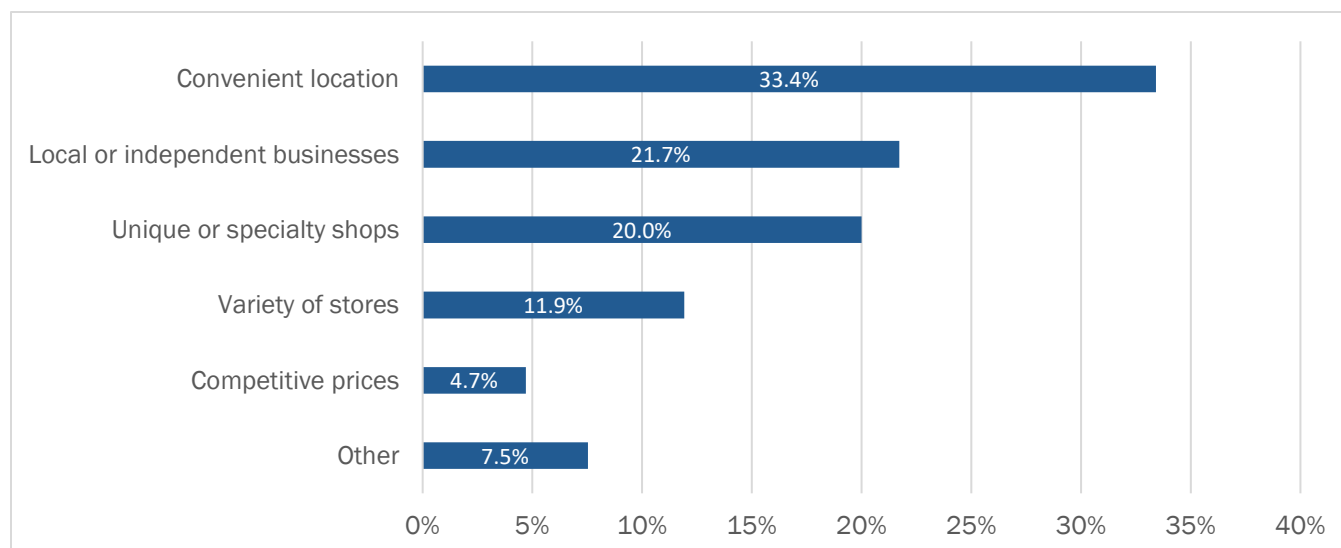
Q14 What activities do you enjoy doing in downtown Airdrie? Select all that apply. (n=785, 1415)



Q14 Top five "Other" responses

Response	Number of mentions	Response	Number of mentions
Attending the library	31	Outdoor leisure activities	13
Attending medical appointments	17	Banking	12
Indoor leisure activities	13		

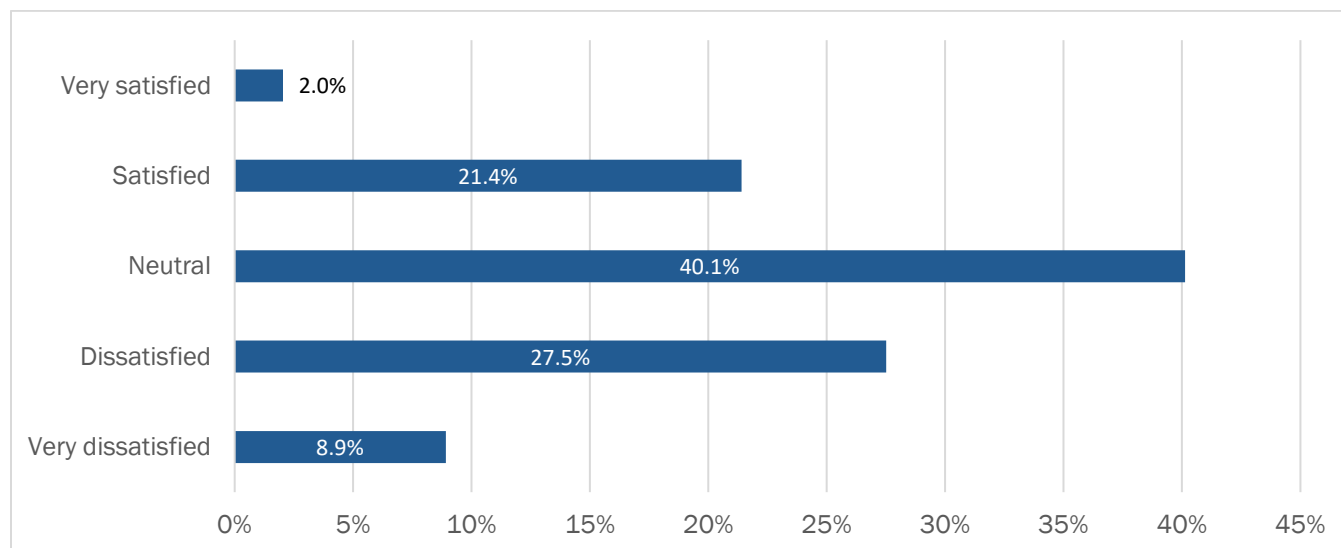
Q15 What are the main reasons you visit downtown Airdrie for retail shopping? Select all that apply. (n=818, 1275)



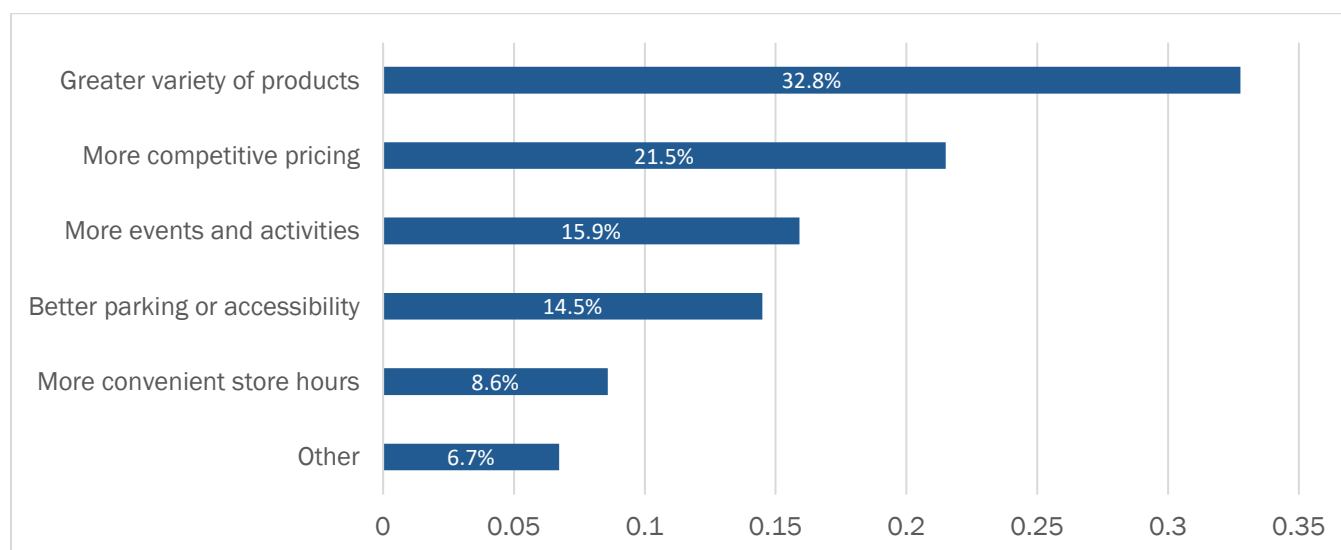
Q15 Top five "Other" responses

Response	Number of mentions	Response	Number of mentions
To visit a unique or specific business	28	Banking	3
If I am there for another reason (e.g. visiting library, gym, picking up/dropping off kids, etc)	15	If they have what I need	3
		It's close to where I work	3

Q16 How would you rate your overall satisfaction with downtown Airdrie as a retail destination? (n=785)



Q17 What could encourage you to visit downtown Airdrie more often? Select all that apply. (n=808, 1828)



Q17 Top five "Other" responses

Response	Number of mentions	Response	Number of mentions
More variety of retail options	31	More shopping/stores	10
A nicer, updated, environment	19	Easier to get to, less traffic congestion	3
Walkability between stores	13		

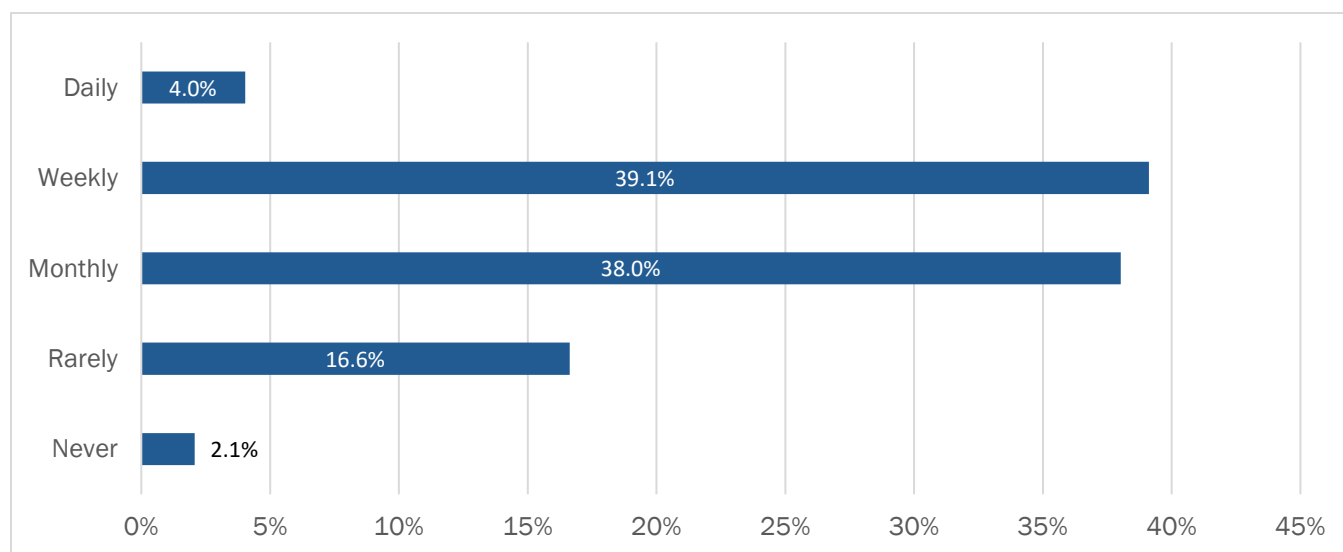
ONLINE AND E-COMMERCE SHOPPING HABITS

Frequency. 39% of respondents cited weekly online shopping with another 38% shopping online monthly. Only approximately 2% of respondents identified that they never shop online.

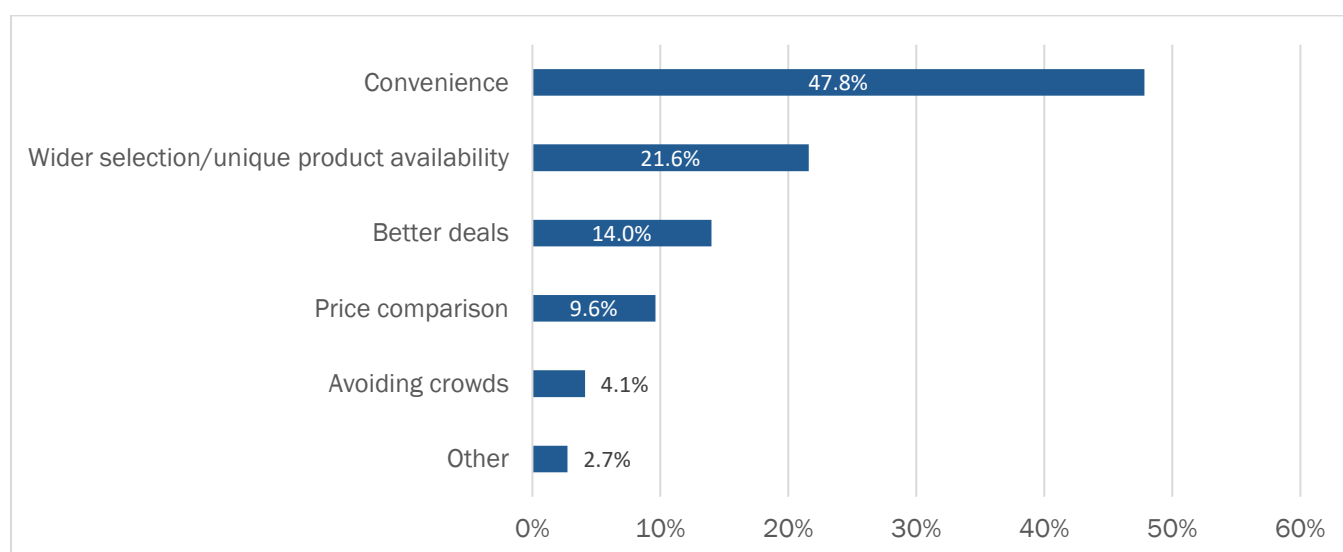
Reason for shopping online. The most frequently identified reason for shopping online was convenience (48%). While some respondents also identified wider selection or unique product availability (22%) and better deals (14%) as contributing reasons.

Important factors for shopping online. Price (61%), delivery (53%) and ease of use of the website/app (52%) were cited as the most important factors for online shopping by respondents.

Q18 How often do you purchase retail products online? (n=818)



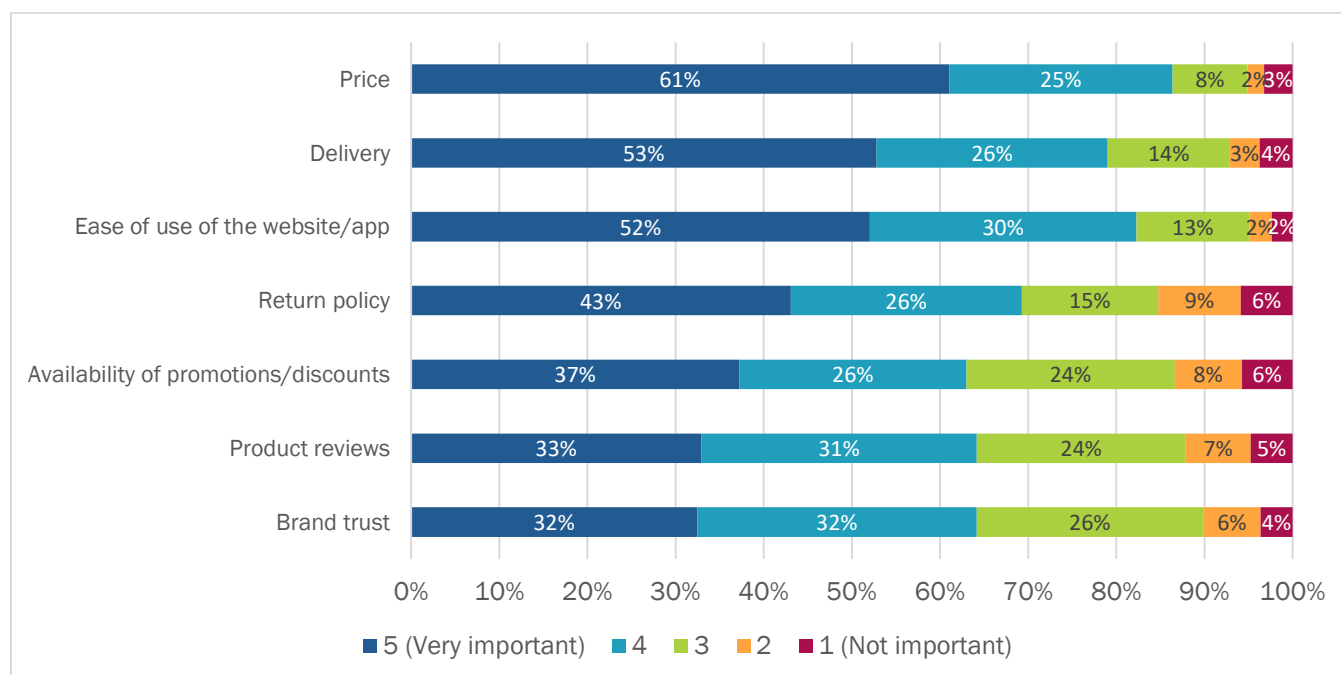
Q19 What is your primary reason for shopping online? (n=801)



Q19 Top five "Other" responses

Response	Number of mentions	Response	Number of mentions
Item not available locally	5	More accessible	2
Item not available in stores	4	Convenience	2
I do not drive	3		

Q20 On a scale of 1-5, how important are the following factors when shopping online? Rating scale: 1 = Not important to 5 = Very important. (n=801)



ENTERTAINMENT AND LEISURE PREFERENCES

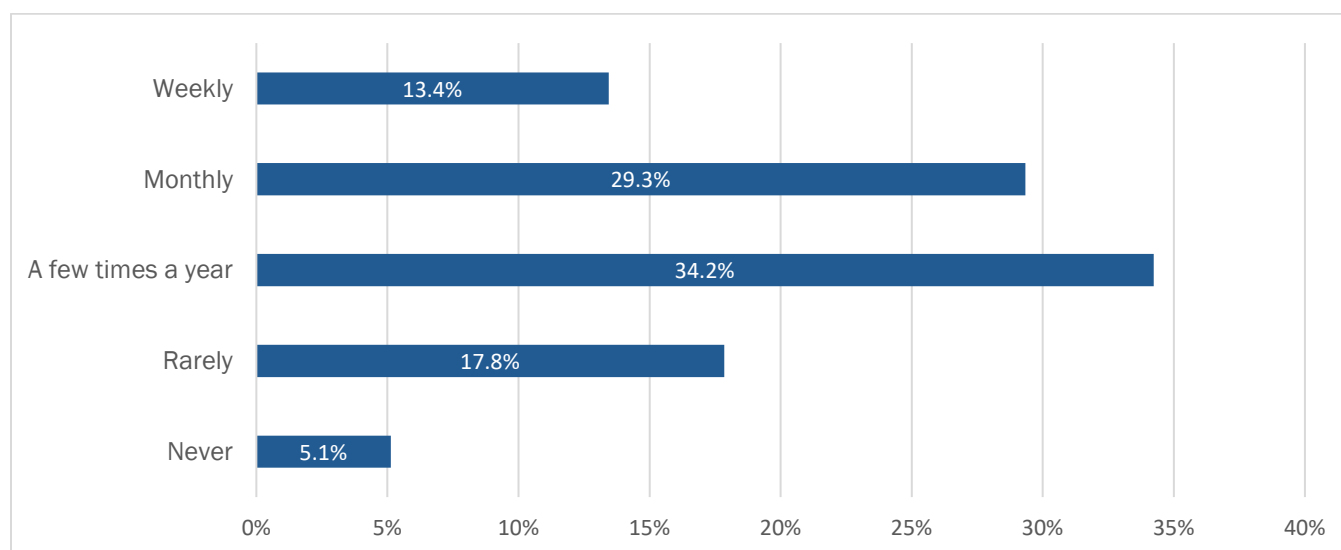
Frequency. Most respondents (34%) indicated they engage in paid entertainment or leisure activities a few times a year, while approximately 30% responded they do so monthly.

Types of activities. Approximately 17% of respondents indicated they partake in ‘free’ entertainment activities in the form of going to parks or other outdoor recreation. The most popular paid types of leisure or entertainment activities included attending movie theatres (16%), festivals or fairs (12%) or indoor recreation (10%).

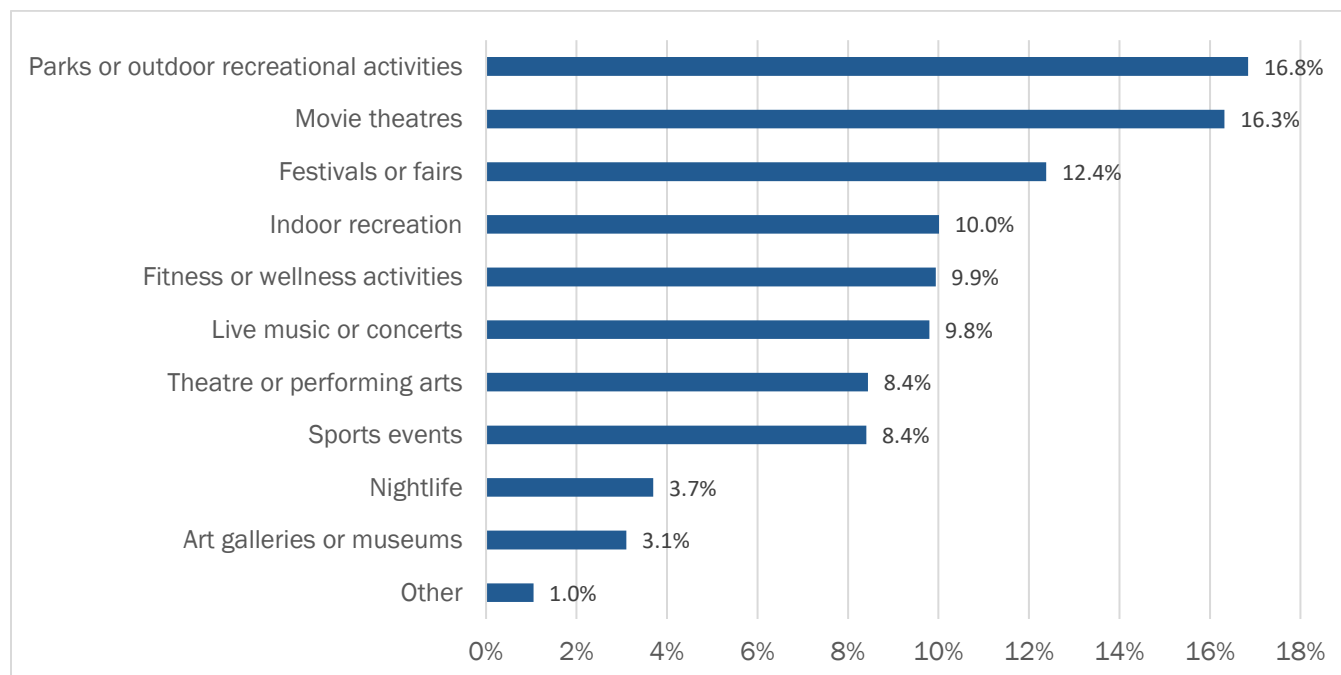
Location of activities. A large majority of respondents (56%) indicated they travel to Calgary for leisure and entertainment activities, while 25% said they stay in Airdrie.

Influencing factors. The most frequently identified factors influencing decisions about leisure and entertainment activities included interest in the specific activity (17%), ticket or entry price (13%), quality of the experience (13%) and location or proximity to home (13%).

Q21 How often do you engage in paid entertainment or leisure activities? (e.g. cinemas, concerts, bowling, theatre, golf simulators, indoor climbing, sports events or festivals)? (n=818)



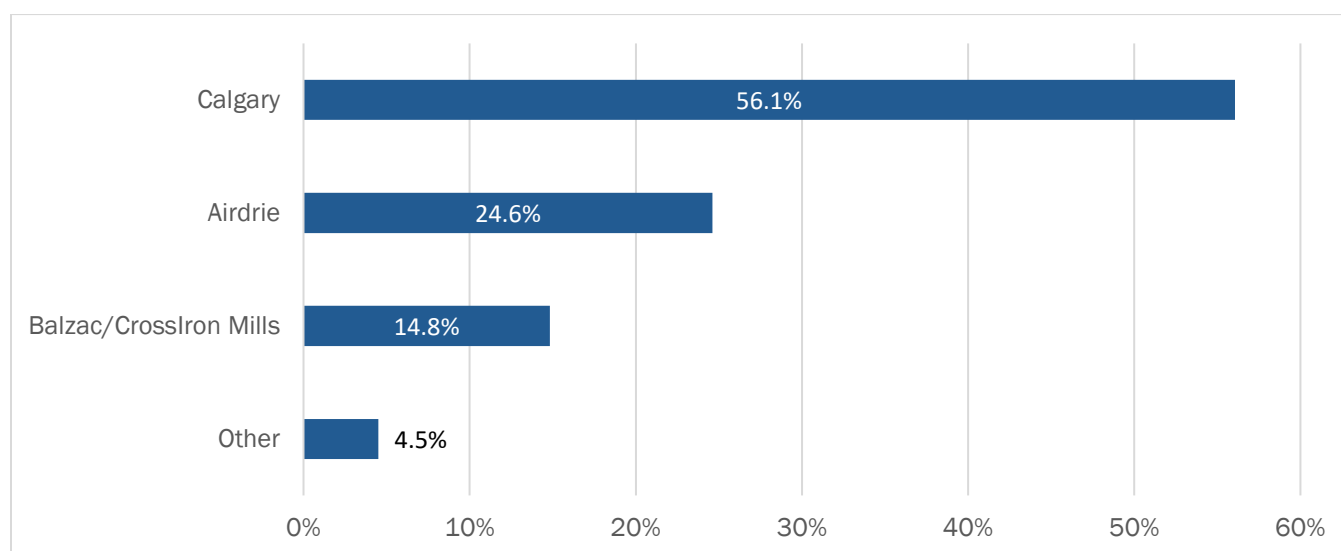
Q22 What types of leisure activities do you participate in most often? Select all that apply. (n=776, 2867)



Q20 Top five "Other" responses

Response	Number of mentions	Response	Number of mentions
Child friendly play spaces	3	Escape rooms	2
Golf	3	Dining	2
Indoor recreation	3		

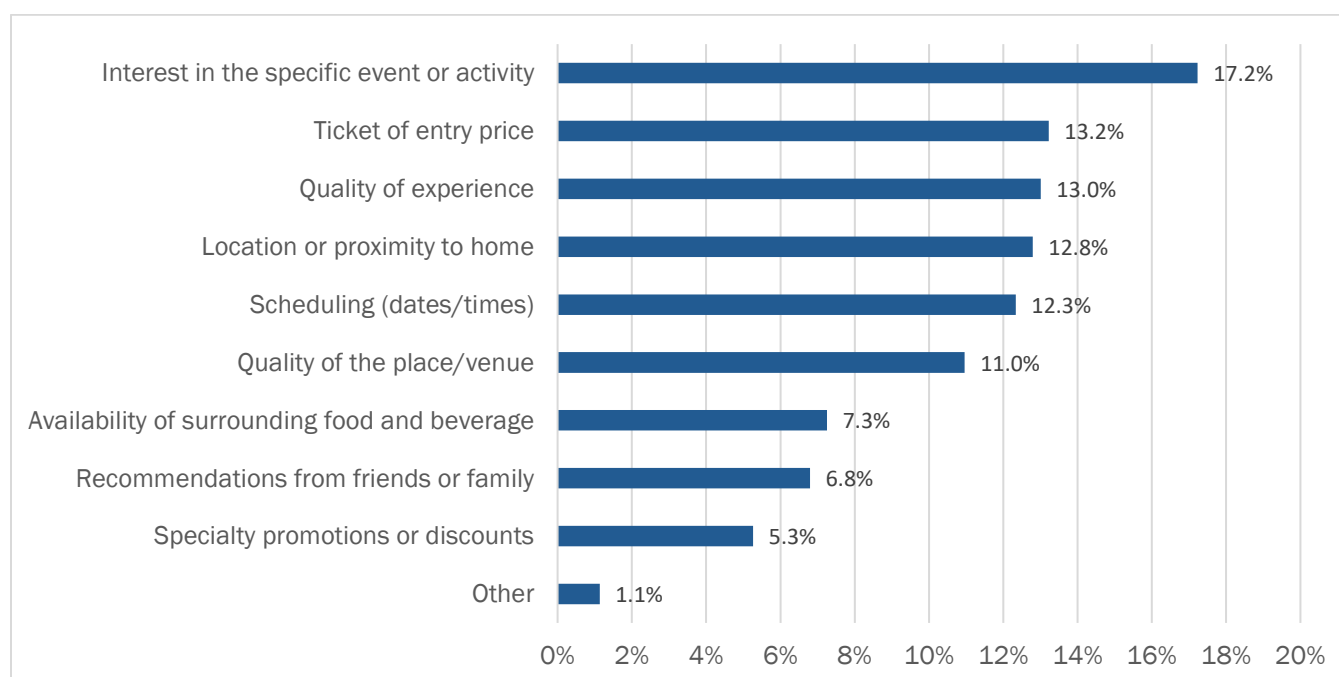
Q23 Where do you typically go for entertainment and leisure activities? (n=776)



Q23 Top five "Other" responses

Response	Number of mentions	Response	Number of mentions
Calgary	14	Balzac	6
Airdrie	11	Home	3
Mountains	10		

Q24 What influences your decisions when choosing entertainment or leisure activities? Select all that apply.
(n=818, 3267)



Q24 Top five "Other" responses

Response	Number of mentions	Response	Number of mentions
Parking availability	3	Accessibility	2
Crowdedness	3	Awareness	2
Location or proximity to home	3		

Q25 Please provide any additional comments or suggestions to improve your local shopping, entertainment or leisure experience in Airdrie. (n=267)

Diverse and affordable retail and dining options (mentions, 134)

Participants expressed that limited retail and dining options drive their decision to partake in these activities in other municipalities near Airdrie. Some suggestions for improvements in these areas included:

- A desire for more clothing stores that provide options across all ages, sizes, styles and budgets. Some respondents articulated the need for stores that cater to budget-conscious shoppers, while others wanted to see more premium shopping options.
- More specialty stores such as fabric, book, home décor and furniture, automotive supplies, sporting goods or ethno-cultural and local/organic food stores.
- Interest in more fine-dining, table-service restaurants both in mid and premium price ranges.

Entertainment and leisure facilities (mentions, 97)

Participants regularly mentioned a desire for more entertainment and leisure options in Airdrie. There was an expressed interest in more entertainment options for all ages, though not specifically co-mingled (i.e. some child-focused, youth focused or adult-focused). Suggestions included:

- Indoor leisure opportunities for adults, youth and children included movie theatres, escape rooms, arcades, play spaces, climbing rooms, spaces for live performances and concerts, mini-golf, night clubs, bowling alleys, a venue for large civic events like concerts and sport events.
- Also included was a desire for more indoor recreation opportunities such as swimming, gym facilities, racket sport and ball courts.

Downtown revitalization and local business support (mentions, 48)

Participants identified that they feel the downtown area needs to be 'spruced up' to create an environment more conducive to wanting to spend more time there, rather than complete an errand and head out. Also expressed were concerns that retail spaces may be too cost prohibitive for small or independent local businesses. Some suggestions in these areas included:

- Several participants identified that clustering small independent stores closer together would be helpful as they could then park in one place and visit several locations by foot. Examples of areas such as the Inglewood neighbourhood in Calgary were provided. Some commented that currently downtown doesn't provide an environment where it would be comfortable or interesting to 'just stroll and drop into shops.'
- Some participants identified that programs to reduce leasing or rental costs for local businesses might help increase the ability of local shops or restaurants to serve residents and to keep prices more affordable for customers.
- Participants also identified that support to local businesses could be offered by way of promotional help as they felt low awareness about local businesses may be a struggle.

Walkability, accessibility and public transit (mentions, 36)

Participants expressed interest in seeing improvements to walkability between shops, better meeting of accessibility needs and better transit to retail, dining, entertainment and leisure destinations both in Airdrie

and in the region (e.g. Cross Iron Mall). These was identified as of significant benefit to those who can't drive, and youth who may not yet be of driving age.

- Participants mentioned the desire for walking paths to get to and from retail destinations, as well as more transit service, to support those who cannot or do not drive.
- Participants also indicated a need for more handicapped parking locations.

Community and culture (mentions, 12)

Participants identified a desire for a more developed cultural scene in Airdrie. Suggestions in this area included:

- More frequent events and festivals as well as affordable event spaces that can accommodate arts performances, showings, concerts, etc. to encourage the arts and well as sports in the city.
- A desire for more local markets, community-led activities, galleries, classes and culturally diverse experiences.
- Participants mentioned the desire for more tree-lined walking paths with benches for getting to and from destinations to encourage healthier options, and more opportunities for community connection.

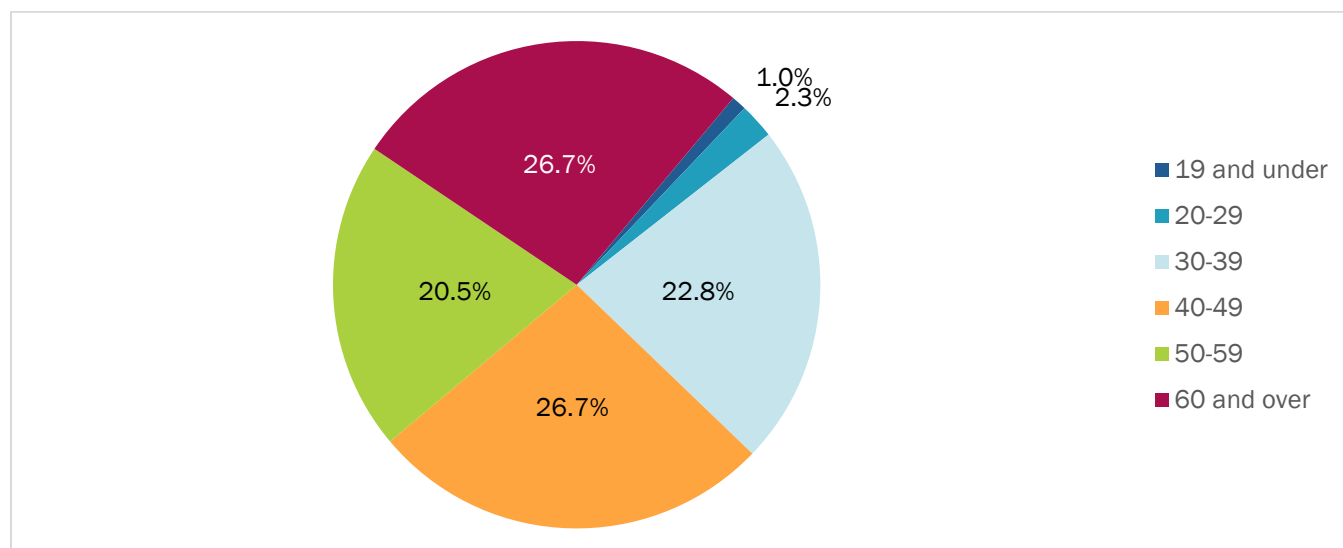
ABOUT THE RESPONDENTS

Age Distribution. The survey represents a broad age range, but the majority of respondents fall between 30 and 50 years old, indicating strong participation from middle-aged adults. Younger (under 30) respondents are underrepresented compared to the core working-age and over 60 groups. Overall, there was a fairly broad cross-section of ages in the respondents

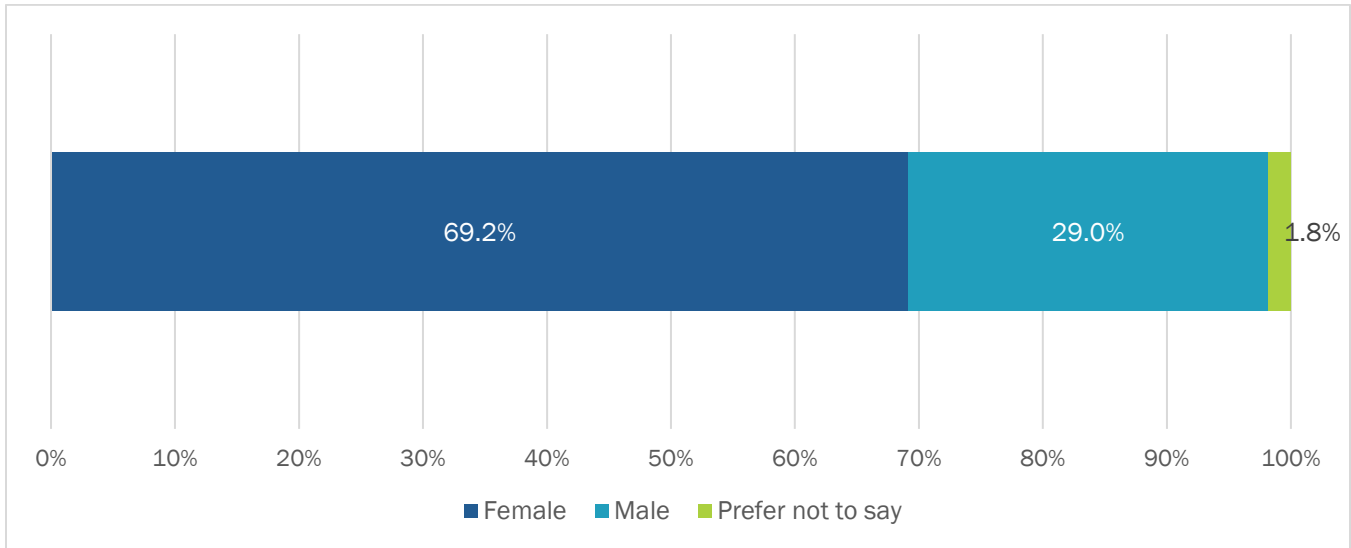
Gender. The survey exhibits a noticeable female majority (69%), aligning with consumer trends where women are often primary decision-makers in household shopping. Male respondents (29%) nonetheless exhibited a healthy participation rate, providing balanced input into the survey results.

Household Income. Respondents span somewhat evenly across income brackets. A significant portion of respondents (46%) report middle-income levels (between \$75,000 and \$150,00). High-income households (above \$150,000) are also well-represented (37%). Lower-income respondents (below \$75,000) represent a smaller, but nonetheless important segment of respondents (17%).

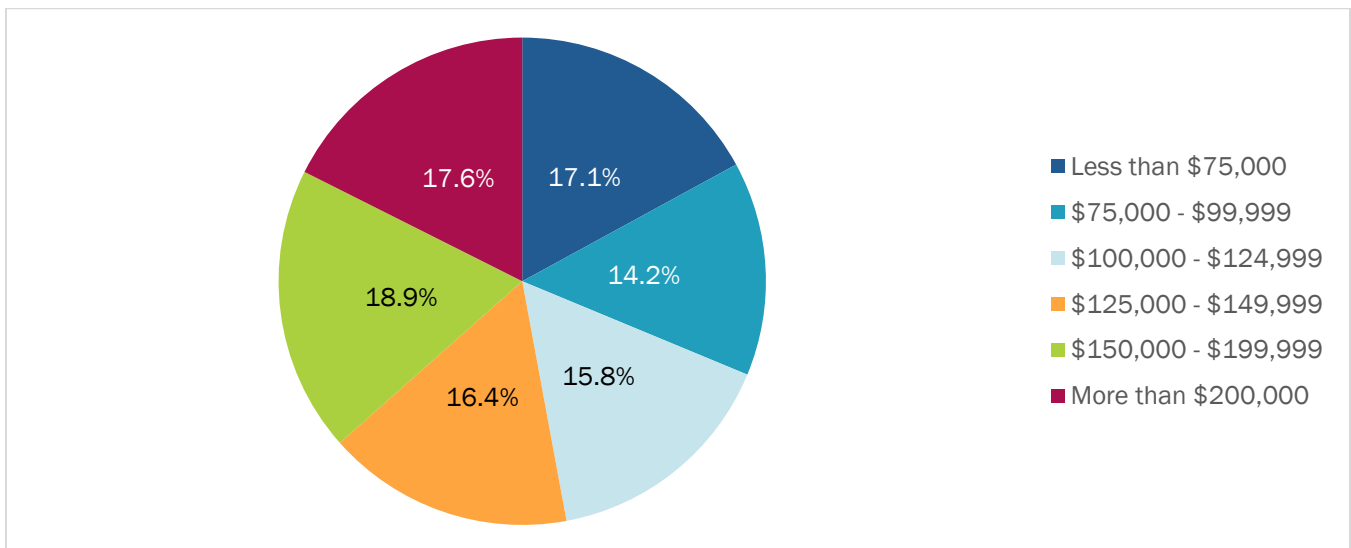
Q26 What age group are you in? (n=813)



Q27 With which gender do you identify? (n=811)



Q28 What is your average household income (annual)? (n=739)



What's Next & Timelines

The findings from this survey will be used over time to help identify gaps in the local retail market and to identify opportunities to support the development of a more tailored and vibrant retail market in Airdrie.

Contact Information

For more information about this project, please contact:

Economic Development

Phone: (403) 948-8844

Email: economic.development@airdrie.ca